

Mentor's Introduction

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Mentor's Introduction

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An important factor that contributes to our current understanding of giftedness is Terman's study of over 1,500 subjects defined by their high scores on the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale. The Genetic Studies of Genius, begun in 1921, is an ongoing, longitudinal study of children who scored 140 or more on the Stanford-Binet intelligence scale. The Genetic Studies of Genius has done much to describe and characterize giftedness and contribute to our understanding of gifted persons. The findings from these studies contributed to understanding of the need for special educational provisions for gifted students.

Arbitrary separation of intelligence and artistic performance has been questioned and challenged for many years. One of today's tasks is to understand the artistically talented student so that he or she can be educated to contribute to our society. False distinctions between intellectual and artistic achievement need to be re-examined and researched so that the most appropriate educational settings, curriculum, and teaching strategies can be designed for our gifted and talented students.

Gareri's research replicates a study conducted in 1938 by Blair that compared the backgrounds, interests, and ambitions of "inferior and superior" junior and senior high students. Blair, influenced by Terman's Genetic Studies of Genius and by studies by Hollingworth, Witty, and others, developed a questionnaire that asked questions about students' hobbies, reading interests, educational and occupational ambitions, favorite and disliked subjects, and parents' educational levels and occupations. Blair studied 3,000 junior and senior high students in Everett, Washington.

Gareri compares questionnaire results of students from two programs at Indiana University for academically gifted and artistically talented junior high students with the results of "superior" students as identified in Blair's study. These populations are quite different; the Washington students were identified from the general population and the contemporary students were nominated for their programs and paid tuition to live on campus in special programs. A number of great differences were found between the populations that were separated by 44 years.

Of particular interest is the comparison between the academically gifted and artistically talented students in the contemporary programs, in which it was found that the artistically talented students are more similar than different to the academic group on almost all responses to the questionnaire. This finding has a great number of educational implications and helps dispel the myth that academically gifted and artistically talented students are two entirely different populations. The population used in Gareri's study is small and selective. Gareri's study should be replicated with a larger, more general population in which artistically talented and academically gifted students are identified and compared with one another and with Blair's students' responses from the past.